

U.S. Serial No. 10/673,469

NIP-252-02

REMARKS

The Applicants request reconsideration of the rejection.

Claims 6-10 remain pending.

Claims 6, 7, and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Cornett, et al., U.S. 5,216,612 (Cornett). The Applicants traverse as follows.

In applying Cornett to independent Claims 6 and 10, the Examiner asserts Cornett's disclosure of a system for supplying parts for management and maintenance of a product, including a server and a database which has at least one piece of information pertaining to parts for management and maintenance of the product, wherein the server is provided with a function of outputting parts information stored in the database, a function of renewing information of parts selected by users, and a function of outputting the selected parts information to manufacturer terminals. Notably, the rejection does not assert that the database has information of degrees of significance of each part, perhaps because the original recitation in Claim 6 required such information to be selectable from a plurality of kinds of information.

Thus, Cornett appears to be primarily directed to a computer-integrated maintenance system which improves on the

U.S. Serial No. 10/673,469

NIP-252-02

decision-making for assigning maintenance of an apparatus and ordering parts therefor, so as to avoid, for example, maintenance on a system that is to be taken off-line permanently. More particularly, Cornett discloses a spare stock management subsystem for controlling spare parts orders, and an engineer change control subsystem for managing and maintaining a parts manual file by adding planned drawings and parts listed on the parts manual file and changing or deleting the file. However, Cornett's subsystem describes only to effect stock management of spare parts, and neither discloses nor suggests to effect management of spare parts including degrees of significance.

In the present invention, the information of the significance degree of the spare parts is sorted according to the significance degree, for those spare parts that replace power plant parts whose loss of function in the power plant would result in stopping of the power plant. The reason that attention is given particularly to the significance degree is that, in a power plant, shutdown can result not only from safety lapses caused by failing parts, but also by the failure of a needed spare part to arrive before the failure of the part which it is to replace, whether safety is a concern or not.

U.S. Serial No. 10/673,469

NIP-252-02

Thus, according to the invention, for such important parts, it is possible to sort the spare parts according to degree of significance so that, at the user side, it is possible to easily select parts for purchase or order from a large volume of parts information, using the degrees of significance. That is, it is possible not only to display simply the results of sorting, but also to reduce the time required for the user to analyze and decide to order certain spare parts whose necessity is not otherwise evident. In addition, the invention reduces the possibility that such important parts will be overlooked when ordering. None of these concerns underlie the teachings of Cornett, and thus the person of ordinary skill is not led to the solutions of the present invention by Cornett.

Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Cornett in view of Johnson, et al., U.S. 5,712,989 (Johnson). Johnson is cited, in combination with Cornett, as teaching that a person of ordinary skill has long known to utilize one-way communication between business partners in a procurement system. Johnson, however, neither anticipates nor suggests the features of the present invention relating to the accumulation, sorting, and provision of significance-degree information of spare parts for employment

U.S. Serial No. 10/673,469

NIP-252-02

in a power plant, to replace power plant parts whose loss of function in the power plant would result in stopping of the power plant, as disclosed and claimed. Therefore, even in combination with Cornett, Johnson does not render obvious the claimed invention.

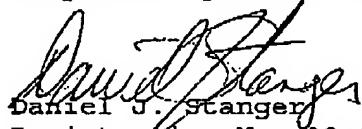
Claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Cornett in view of Kou, U.S. 6,363,365 (Kou). Kou is cited, in combination with Cornett, as teaching the use of limited access capability in a procurement system. Kou, however, does not teach or fairly suggest a database including information of degrees of significance of each of parts sorted in significance degree as spare parts for employment in a power plant, to replace power plant parts whose loss of function in the power plant would result in stopping of the power plant. Thus, even in combination with Cornett, Kou fails to render obvious the claimed invention.

U.S. Serial No. 10/673,469

NIP-252-02

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the Applicants request reconsideration of the rejection and allowance of the claims.

Respectfully submitted,


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